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ABSTRACT

This narrative description of the author's participation in an environmental education program is intended to provide first grade teachers with ideas for incorporating multidisciplinary environmental education into the existing curriculum. Environmental education, within this publication, is broadly conceived. In addition to the more traditional focus on experience with and respect for living things, a variety of attitudes and techniques for humanizing the classroom experience are also discussed. An appendix includes three learning activity packages: 1) a program using cameras to increase environmental awareness; 2) an expression in movement program to enhance awareness of shapes and motion; and, 3) a creative writing activity (for the third grade) that centers around the theme of the pupil in his environment. Each package is outlined in terms of objectives, activities, the author's own experience with the package, and books and materials required. A bibliography of books, films, and other aids for teachers and students is included. (Author/AWW)

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HUXLEY COLLEGE
CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RELATED PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST GRADE

Angelyn K. Shafer

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Sedro-Woolley Project Report No. 7
November 1971
U.S.O.E. Project No. 0-0848
Grant No. OEG-0-70-5039

Huxley College of Environmental Studies
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Bellingham, Washington 98225

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HUXLEY COLLEGE
Environmental Education Center

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RELATED PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST GRADE

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Huxley College of Environmental Studies

TO THE TEACHER:

Presented here are ideas for multidisciplinary environmental education. The objectives of the ideas and methods suggested are clearly stated. The overall objective is to provide you, the teacher, with an aid in the development of your approach to teaching for and about the environment. These are not learning packages designed to be applied verbatim, but suggestions for ideas and methods that will enable you to develop learning packages. The contents of this report represent only the first treatment of the idea. It is published in this form in order that teachers may have an opportunity to experiment with it.

You will have to design your personal approach to environmental education. You are an environmental educator now, whether you realize it or not, because the environment is all around you and you are teaching about the environment that surrounds both you and your students. The state of the environment indicates that there is something wrong with the way in which you have learned to perceive and behave relative to the environment, and with the way you are teaching others to learn and behave in their environment today.

The ideas presented here are examples of ways in which you can incorporate environmentally beneficial learnings into your curriculum. The intent is not that you "add on" something specifically environmental to your curriculum, but that you incorporate environmental learnings into your treatments of the subject matter with which you have already been dealing. The specific manner in which you treat your responsibility to

educate for environmental stewardship is up to you. It is hoped that these and many other ideas will help you in your effort to understand the meaning of "environmental education" and its implications for you as a teacher and as a human organism.

The environmental education development project of which this report is a part is an ongoing one, and it is hoped that all who attempt to use the report will participate in the project by reporting the results of their efforts to the project staff. The staff will compile the ideas and methods collected. This will enable all working on the development of environmental education to share each other's work and will promote the spirit of cooperation essential to the success of any project as broad as this one.

Please report the methods and results derived from your use of this report to:

John Miles, Director
Environmental Education Project
Huxley College of Environmental Studies
Bellingham, Washington 98225

Thank you.

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RELATED PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST GRADE

A child coming to us in first grade is active and stimulated from the artificial world of cartoons he watches on television. One of the tasks of the first grade teacher is to help him become aware of new environments--the schoolroom and the world outside the schoolroom. As a participant in the Sedro-Woolley Environmental Education Project, I hoped to be able to change the emphasis in my teaching to help these first grade children value and appreciate living things and to encourage them to feel a personal responsibility for taking care of their environment.

It is extremely difficult to explain my year in the sense of one thing that was a project. In retrospect, I feel as if the children and I have explored many things together, and that I used ideas and approaches I never thought of trying before. It hadn't much to do with where I was, at Big Lake Elementary School; it hadn't much to do with the fact that I had taught school for twenty years and could have felt myself to be an expert. I had been teaching in Big Lake for two years doing my conscientious best to teach six- and seven-year-old children to read. I thought I was good to the children and really aware of their problems. I usually had a quiet, busy classroom.

So now, what would be different? How could I help these children to appreciate their environment and to become responsible for taking care of it? How could I make the classroom the kind of place that would make every child, every day, say: "This is living, this is what I call good."*

*James L. Hymes, Jr., "Making Tomorrow Now--The People Environment," Childhood Education, December 1970.

The first breakthrough for me came when a pupil asked me if he could change his seat. Without worrying about whether it would put him next to somebody with whom he would talk too much, I said, "Yes." Then I told the class they could all put their desks wherever they wanted to in the room. With much noise and delight this was accomplished. One youngster said to me in some awe, "Do you like this?" We moved our desks periodically the rest of the year. As part of the plan, I requested that all the children involved in the move commit themselves to sitting in the place they chose until such time as the desks were moved again. Sometimes the desks ended up in a straight line across the room as everyone sat next to a friend. Sometimes they were strangely arranged back-to-back. Quite often they were pushed up against my desk, or a window, or the bookshelves, as if their owners were seeking out a safe place to be.

I made it a custom to seek out small-sized salt and pepper shakers in the shapes of animals in second-hand stores. I looked for little interestingly-shaped baskets and other small oddities to look at or play with, all of which I brought into the classroom. In addition, I brought vases, mugs, pieces of bric-a-brac, and other decorative pieces from home. All of these items were placed at random on a shelf. It was interesting to watch the children begin to decorate their desks with some of these items. They also brought their own treasures in from the playground, or from our outdoor walks, or from home. I wanted to encourage each child to develop a personal feeling about the place in which we lived at school.

In the search for material to help me make my classroom more liveable, I learned about The Big Rock Candy Mountain Catalogue.* The winter issue

*This catalogue is available from The Portola Institute, Inc., 1115 Merrill Street, Menlo Park, California 94025.

1970 was filled with reading matter on how to make your classroom environment more stimulating and fun. One day I was discussing my classroom experiments with the head teacher, who mentioned that he had just heard on the radio that a new shipment of refrigerators had arrived at a local store. Anyone could have the boxes if they came and got them. The head teacher brought us one large refrigerator box. I put the box into the room and let the children do with it what they wished. They liked it as a resting place, and as a retreat for reading to which they could take a pal. They prepared a puppet show in the box and then staged it there. They ended up painting it with tempera paint in a sloppy, spilling way. (I was fortunate that our custodian seemed to take what he found in our classroom with pleasant acceptance.) Throughout the year the children enthusiastically created ways in which the box could be used, and their creativity in using it was remarkable. At the end of the year, a smaller box I brought in for recycling paper became a dog house for one youngster. He cut out windows and laboriously put in scotch tape panes. He took the greatest delight in sitting inside the box, which just fit over him.

On another occasion, a friend brought his full-sized canoe into our classroom. The presence of this unusual object in our room seemed to effectively break down constraint between teachers and children. The canoe brought in children from other classes and grade levels who displayed honest interest in what their younger fellow-students were doing in their unusual classroom.

These activities in the classroom, stimulated by my reading, became integrated into my plan of action toward an environmental philosophy. The activity and the philosophy were interchangeable, and at all times experimental, as I had no specific guidelines but my background of experience

and my readings by which to know when I was achieving instructional objectives.

The development of instructional objectives identifiable in my mind as "environmental" was quite a job in itself. Recognizing that the very young children with whom I was working would probably benefit most from affective learning experiences, I decided to think in terms of strengthening the five perceptual senses of the children. My objectives would be:

1. To create an awareness in the child that he is a member of a group living together for a considerable period each day. (I would attempt to demonstrate to him the importance of waiting for others to give their ideas while he listened. I would try to help him become aware of space and the need to share space with his fellows, and I would help him become aware of spatial relations as groups moved from one place to another.)

2. To develop in the child an appreciation for the non-material environment that surrounds him.

3. To create an awareness in the pupil that there is more than one point of view.

I wished to have the children engage in Environmental Encounters, and it was my thought that the awakening of the perceptive senses of the children to the beautiful living things around them was the best approach for a six- or seven-year-old child.

I have searched for a definition of Environmental Encounter. It is so personal a thing to the teacher and the children she lives with that each individual must work it out himself. It is for me a realization that whenever I am with these little human beings I need to forget the traditional pupil-teacher relationship, with the children sitting at the prescribed time in the prescribed place, poring over their little readers. I need to forget the idea that the making of phonics-related marks on a

enough energy and incentive left to pick up about four basketsfull of litter left on the playground the night before by the crowd at the Little League game. It was a rather pointed lesson to my children how little people care about their land, and the problems of treating that land properly.

Another activity I had the children engage in to help them develop their perceptual senses involved expression through body movement. Reich states, in The Greening of America, that in Consciousness III "there is a belief that a person's body is a most essential part of himself, not something to be ignored while one carries on a conversation with his face." As the children participate in movement activities, the sense of feeling themselves in motion develops the perception of themselves in their environment, wherever it is. It also develops the visual sense in children. To portray the characteristics of various organisms through movement, whether another person or an animal creature, the child must learn to observe closely, to really see. Another outgrowth of this exercise is that the teacher who participates in movement activities with the children becomes more sensitive to them and they feel a sense of rapport and involvement with her. A learning activity packet for first-graders that I call "Expression in Movement" is included in the Appendix.

Throughout the year, I found the following plan of action for the school day to be quite workable: From 8:30 to 9:00 the children could be in the room or outdoors. They were always welcome in the room, and that is where I was too during this time. At 9:00 or a little later, if quite a few of them were engaged in projects they wanted to finish, we gathered together just to talk awhile. We talked about and planned projects they

would undertake, during these planning sessions. (Usually I did have a specific overall plan in mind and we did have their papers for them to work on.) Since there wasn't enough time in a day to correct everyone's paper individually, we did it together; I used the overhead projector to show the correct answers. The children who hadn't finished their work did it then.

We conformed to the pattern of the school for recess. At 10:30 or so the children had snacks or graham crackers that were kept in the classroom for them. After morning recess, which ended at 11:00, I went to the third grade for creative writing, and the third grade teacher, a young man, came into my room to teach arithmetic. (A learning activity packet for creative writing for third graders is also included in the Appendix.) Both classes responded to this exchange with enjoyment.

At 12:00 we went to lunch, and after lunch we made our explorations around the schoolyard, around the school area, or further afield, in our field trips. We frequently shared these field trip activities with the second grade teacher and her class. This second grade teacher, who was not a member of the Environmental Education Project, but who was very interested in it, shared ideas with me and we did many things together. We will be able to improve the quality of future field trips and walks by our discussions and exchange of ideas; we both feel we have benefited from working together. We observed, for example, that many times the children's perception of the beauty around them got lost in the pursuit of their own excitements. This is not bad in itself, but just the elation of throwing rocks at things begins to be destructive. We both want to heighten the awareness of the children during these walks without becoming didactic about

it; our own enthusiasm and response to the "right" things will bring about improvement in this respect.

During the day, I listened to the children read by working with them individually, while other children were writing their "words" on the blackboard, or as the year progressed, their "stories." The children were free to come and go to the lavatory at need. They were free to do such things in the room as tend their plants, work with clay, paint a picture, or work on an art project. They were also free to work together in pairs or small groups. This they did with enthusiasm. (A visiting teacher from a nearby town was astounded to see my pupils bound out into the hall and settle down to read together, and commented that the principal of her school did not let them use their halls. Our principals in the Sedro-Woolley School District have been encouraging and helpful in letting us experiment with innovative educational activities.)

Only a teacher bound by the old, accepted idea of the totally-structured classroom would feel uncomfortable in a classroom situation similar to that described above. I feel that the need for teachers to break out of the "traditional" pattern is very urgent. I have discussed this subject with other teachers, and it seems to be very painful for some of them. Their discomfiture at the idea of a "free" classroom does not seem to be related specifically to age, or to the number of years spent in the classroom. I have listened to very young teachers defend the dictum of "every child in his seat doing his prescribed work." The traditional atmosphere and methods provide a comfortable way of teaching and such teachers are a little wrathy at the idea that freedom of activity in the room and the noise of interaction among the children provide a more desirable learning environment than

their traditional ways of conducting their classrooms. It is true that it requires more time and effort for a teacher to plan and direct learning in a non-traditional classroom. I did more work in directing learning activities last year than I had done in the past.

This class compares well with other first grade classes I have taught in their reading achievements. The children all read to the full extent of their individual abilities. (That is one lesson the traditional teacher learns painfully. It isn't within her ability to force children to learn to read. It is not her excellent and praiseworthy standards, nor the demands she makes of herself and her pupils that will determine their success.) The lessened emphasis in this class on the "reading circle" approach to reading has not deterred the development of the children in reading.

At one point in the year I administered to each child a word-instant response survey, a sample of which is included here in the Appendix. In giving this word-response check, I observed that children were just delighted to have my full attention centered on one of them at a time. This observation was confirmed by the student from the University of Washington Testing Bureau working with me, who provided this survey and others as a means of helping to evaluate for the Project the changes that might occur in the children's learning as a result of the application of environmental emphasis to their studies. I had mentioned my finding to her and she confirmed this same delight from the children as she worked with each one individually. Work on the word-response check also revealed how barren the experiential background is in some children. In the "book-reading-circle," "answer-question" approach to teaching, I don't believe it is always possible to

discover that it is this paucity of experience that sometimes leads to meagerness of expression and thought in a child. Since I participated in the survey and became more sensitive to the children's needs, I have tried to encourage the children to express their perceptions and observations. One little girl came to me in excitement over a lacy pattern she had observed in a piece of rust. This same child had found it difficult to answer a direct question before we had our environmentally-oriented walks. Now she came to me freely and shared her thoughts.

For the teacher, I believe it is necessary to think of each moment spent with the children as an environmental encounter. It is necessary to think about the quality of this time we spend with them. There is a very simple way of feeling about it: Is it fun spending this time in this place together? What do you observe about the children as they are together? Do they enjoy being with each other? Do they enjoy being with you? Do you enjoy being with them? Are you planning some different and interesting places in which your children can learn together? If you do not have a comfortable feeling about these questions, it might be important to ask yourself if your best place in the environment is with children.

In concluding my comments about my philosophy and experiences during the year, I can say I went to school each day with zest. Many times I thought as I worked with the children, "This is a place I like to be." When the children came charging through the door in the morning they greeted me with a sense of security and happiness that I know is special. The Sedro-Woolley Project has awakened in me a challenging new sense of exploration in the schoolroom, and it's fun!

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Let's Keep America Beautiful, 18 min., color, Richfield.

Litterbug, 8 mins., color, Walt Disney Productions.

Lumber States, 18 mins., color, United World.

Once Upon A Time, 5 mins., B&W, United World.

OTHER AIDS

"The Big Rock Candy Mountain Catalogue," Portola Institute, Inc., 1115 Merrill Street, Menlo Park, California 94025.

LEARNING ACTIVITY PACKAGE: "Three Eyes Are Better than Two"

A Program Using Cameras with First Grade Children

Objectives:

- To help the child become observant of his environment by using a camera as a third eye.
- To give the child a heightened awareness of his sense of sight and an opportunity to use it to isolate those objects he wants to photograph.
- To discover what a child will photograph when he is free to choose his own subjects, i.e., to discover what is important to him.
- To have the child write his own descriptions of pictures he has taken and read those descriptions aloud to others, to help make reading and writing personal tools to express himself.

Preliminary Activity:

Since this project would be teacher-introduced, I did some preliminary work for the sake of motivation. This unit was worked on from February to May on a timetable determined by the availability of cameras which the Project had provided and which we were sharing with another class. The preparatory activities were carried out in conjunction with our regular program. (Other teachers planning a unit like this would want to work out their own timetables.)

As a first step, I cut out comic strips about Donald Duck to be looked at and read. We commented about how the story went from one thought to the next thought. It was talking through pictures. The next day I had large photographs in the room for the children to look at. These were pictures of Skagit County outdoor areas taken by Lee Mann, a local photographer and former teacher active in environmental education acitivities. We discussed the pictures together and talked about what we could do if we had our own cameras to take pictures with.

Mr. Mann came to visit our room to talk to the children about photography. He named the different parts of the camera: shutter button, viewfinder, winder, lens, shutter aperture. The children enjoyed the vocabulary of photography and wrote it down. Later, Mr. Juntenan, another teacher, brought his large camera into the room for the children to examine. The lens on this camera was large enough so the children could see themselves upside down. They were ecstatic, and wanted to know if you turned the camera over, would you still be upside down. They were encouraged to try it to see for themselves.

We used the three cameras we already had for class pictures that the children suggested. They were allowed to take the pictures themselves and did very well. They also took pictures of the swamp in the spring, observing that the skunk cabbage was still tightly curled up. Later in the season, a child who was most interested took another picture of the same skunk cabbage in the early stages of bloom, and we were amazed to see how much it had grown. Offerings were brought into the classroom. (It was the first time even I had smelled skunk cabbage.)

We had also observed that our classroom environment had a sink with badly eroded linoleum around it from dripping water. We took a picture of that so we could appreciate how much better it would look when it was repaired. We brought newspapers into the room to see pictures that other photographers had taken. At last the great day came and we had our Instamatic-type cameras.

Activity:

An efficient bookkeeping process was important to the success of the program. Each roll of film had twenty exposures on it. After a

letter was sent home to the parents with the cameras explaining our project and asking their permission for the children to take the pictures, I labeled the cameras with alphabet letters, A, B, C, etc., printed on masking tape. I kept a list in my plan book of which children were assigned which cameras, and I also wrote their names and the numbers of pictures they would be taking on the tape. When the roll of film was used, I put my name and the names of children who had used it on the cartridge. The clerk at the drugstore then wrote these names on the envelopes of developed prints. We had very good success in each child getting his own pictures back.

When the prints came back, I sat down with each child separately to select his own pictures, which were put into an envelope with his name on it. When all the pictures were back we would write about our pictures as a class project. This method was a very "structured" way to deal with the photos, but since the school year was nearly over, time was an important factor. In future I would like to let the children work on a similar project in a more leisurely manner and at times they choose, preferably nearer the beginning of the year.*

Each child chose four of his pictures to write about. We used the 8x13 ruled paper they were accustomed to. The children were so enthusiastic

*A good reason emerged for doing this activity in the fall, early after school has started. Most of the children took pictures of their homes and families the first time. This was desirable, because as we looked for the pictures each child took, we shared a time together for me to listen to "oh so many things" about their pictures. Tim, who had enrolled late in the year and had been rather aloof, became eager as he told me about his snapshots. From that time on there was a warmth between us that I had not achieved before. If this sharing and rapport could be established early in the year it would be very valuable. After the home and family pictures are taken, the cameras could be used again in the spring. We could evaluate by the kinds of pictures taken the second time how much the five senses approach had sharpened the children's perception of other environments.

LEARNING ACTIVITY PACKAGE: "Expression in Movement"

An Example of Creative Movement that Can Be Worked Out with a Class of First Grade Children

Objectives:

- To experience the self in motion and in stillness.
- To become aware of the shapes around us.
- To become aware of shapes which we can make with our bodies, and the shapes of particular things we find in our environment.
- To become aware of the motion of things which we see around us.

Outline for Action:

This lesson was woven about the theme of beach life, since the class had been reading, learning, and talking about "The Beach at Low Tide" in preparation for a field trip to the beach. Other themes could be used equally well to coordinate this activity with other learning activities under way. It is a good idea to have at hand a card with notes on it about what you are going to do and how you will proceed. For the classroom teacher who is just beginning to try some innovative ideas with movement it is a necessity to have the plan defined and well in mind before any work is done.

It is ideal to have a large room such as a gymnasium to work in, but you can always push the desks back and work in your classroom. (I think it would be fun to try the lesson out-of-doors, but the Northwest weather doesn't always lend itself to that.)

After the children are gathered together, it is well to practice with some exploratory "action" and "stillness" words. Here are two groups of words: the first column consists of words to initiate action and the

second of words to stop it.

Shake	Grip (to grip yourself by putting your arms around your knees or around your waist)
Gallop	Freeze
Whirl	Collapse
Creep	Pounce

Some preliminary directions you can give to initiate the activity are:

- Run without touching anyone.
- Stop very still.
- Put your feet down as if you were making footprints in the sand.
- Make some shapes with your bodies: curl all up, then spread yourself out wide (all of you stretched is out wide).

Next, gather the children together near you, everyone sitting on the floor. Teacher has seashells ready--big knobby oyster shells, smooth clam shells, spiralled snail shells. Discuss with the children how the shells look. Are they bumpy? Are they smooth and round? Are they twisted? How can we make our bodies seem like these shells? Try to make the shape of one of the shells. Try to move while keeping the shape. Then move from one shape to another.

Children love to repeat activities and you can now use a record to accompany and stimulate their movements. The record could suggest traveling in space, making shapes, in and out motions, forward and back, up and down, light and heavy. Some phrases related to beach life can be used also in motivating the children to movement, i.e., "The tide is out, the limpet is staying on his rocky home." By alternating thoughts of motionless animals of the beach with concepts of motion you can provide for rest

periods. (One needs to be careful not to overtire the children--though my suspicion is that the adult will invariably tire first.)

This expression in movement unit is excellent when a change of pace is needed after a discussion period or a story-telling session.

Conclusion:

As an outgrowth of this experience, children will develop an ever-growing awareness of the creative aspect of movement.

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Records (Listening Program for Primary and Upper Grades, RCA Victory Record Library for Elementary Schools, Education Department, 155 East 24th Street, New York, New York 10010)

LEARNING ACTIVITY PACKAGE: "Creative Writing in the Third Grade"

Objectives:

During this unit the pupil is expected to write in several different forms: a letter, an autobiography, a cinquain, and an imaginative sketch. The theme around which compositions will be written is the pupil thinking about himself in his environment.

The activity is carried on daily in classtime of an hour's length. Some days are spent in preliminary activities to provide an impetus for writing; some days are spent in the writing itself. Children who want to do so will share their writing by reading it to the class. This activity helps to stimulate other children who find it difficult to get started on their own writing, because it is fun to read aloud to someone what you have written.

For the purposes of this written unit I am giving for each assignment (1) the reason for writing each form; (2) the stimulative activity given to the children to impress on them the theme around which they will write; and (3) an example of the children's writing.

Activity:

1. An Autobiographical Sketch

   Purpose. To focus the child's thought on himself as an individual; to increase his awareness of his individuality.

   Stimulative Activity. The teacher writes an autobiography about herself. This outline is suggested:

   a. Your name, where you were born, and something interesting you recall from your childhood.

   b. Where you went to school--grade school, high school, and college.

c. Something about your present life and family.

d. Something you like to do.

e. Something you do not like.

f. A personal thought about your attitudes and feelings about people; children, for example.

As part of the stimulative activity the teacher reads her autobiographical sketch to the children and talks further about it with them if they seem interested. Then the children proceed to write about their own lives. (I spelled all the words they asked for, since creative writing time was to be enjoyable and not a struggle over spelling and grammar.)

Example of student's writing.

My Autobiography

My name is Yvonne Walls. I was born on October 22. I was born in Big Lake, Washington. I am the last of the family. My dad calls me the baby of the family. We have four children and we have six in our family. I like to go fishing and swimming and almost everything. I hate washing dishes and cleaning the house. I want to be an airline stewardess when I grow up.

2. The Cinquain As a Poetry Form

Purpose. The purpose for studying this form is to help the children think in terms of short, concise words describing a subject and to apply these varied words and phrases to a particular subject in a set pattern. The form for a cinquain is:

a. One word to name the subject.

b. Two words to describe it.

c. Three words of action about it.

d. Four words in a phrase about the subject.

e. One word that sums up the subject.

Stimulative Activity. For originating the activity I brought in numerous pieces of wood, both pieces from the sawmill and drifwood from the beach. These were put on each desk. Then the class discussed the patterns left by the sawcuts, and by erosion on the driftwood. Next I read examples of cinquain poetry written by other children, after which we wrote a class cinquain together. Each student then wrote a cinquain by himself.

Example (the cinquain written by the class).

Wood
Hard, heavy
Cut, chopped, sawed
Good in hot fires
Lumber

3. Writing About an Experience Out-of-Doors

Purpose. The class went to a nearby fast-flowing creek and sat on the ground by its banks. I wanted the students to translate into words what they saw, felt, smelled, and heard there at that particular place. Paper and a pencil and a book to write on were each child's equipment for the day.

Stimulative Activity: Each child wrote the names of the five senses on his paper. Then he was instructed to think very hard about what he perceived with each sense, and to write words that described the sensations he had in that setting by the creek.

Example (written by a third-grade girl):

Smelling - fresh

Seeing - water, dirt, grassy, rushing

Feeling - cold, wet, smooth

Hearing - rushing waters, splash

Tasting - good, dirty, fresh, cool

Conclusion. The children enjoyed this activity very much and did some of their best thinking and writing.

4. A Letter to a City Friend

Purpose. An effort to help the children think about the place where they live.

Stimulative Activity. For stimulating thoughts I read City Boy Country Boy by Miriam Schlein. Before we wrote we also went to the woods nearby and sat and talked about what it was like in the woods. (When we got back to our classroom that day we saw five deer in a field with the cows that we can see from our classroom window. Needless to say, some time was spent at the window just looking out and watching the deer amble back into the woods. I believe our noisy entrance into the woods brought them out into the open.) We also looked through a book of photographs taken in the city--Reflections in Pike Place Markets by Nancie Gee. Then I asked the children to imagine that each had a friend in the city who had never been to the country, and to write a letter telling his friend what he might like to know about living in the country.

The letters were started in one class period and finished in the next.

Examples (letters written by a boy and a girl)

Dear John,

We went to woods yesterday, and there are lots of leaves in the wood, and also there is grass and lots and lots of trees. There are birds and rabbits and deers and lots of other animals

in the woods. There is lots of cabbage (skunk) in the woods. There is mud and dirt. It is sometimes dark in the woods. The skunk cabbage. I hope you can go to the woods somday.

Sincerely yours, Alco

Dear Susan,

I wish you could be out here. There are trees and even a fire house. and you just should see all the animals. and the sky is blue. We have a school house too. Do not get that wrong. But the trees are green. They are white and brown. We have cars too, but they do not come all the time. We have mountains. We have horses. We have leaves all over.

Your friend, Barbara

5. "What Is Good and What Is Bad"

Purpose. To encourage children to identify and give serious thought to their own values and to express these values in writing.

Stimulative Activity. We watched a series of 35 mm slides about Skagit County to identify the good and bad of it. We obtained the slides from the Cascade Junior High School Library Environmental Materials Center. Since this series of excellent slides was accompanied by background music, we found it possible to discuss what we were seeing. Some of the children recognized the scenes as places they knew. Viewing the slides took one class period; we did the writing in the next. As always, I spelled the words needed.

Examples. (Since I returned most of these writings to the children, it is unfortunate that both of the examples given here are on "What Is Bad.")

What Is Bad

by Brian

Bad is getting in a fight with someone and bad is throwing garbage where it is not supposed to be thrown. Bad is pollution. Pollution makes bad air for some of the people and it stinks the world. Say, and I think bad is to be a tree. A tree you can not walk around like people can. And us people are lucky. And bad is getting initiated.*

the end.

What Is Bad by Joe

I like the factorys because they make livings. But there bad because they destroy air, water, and animal life. Just wait if this trash throwing keeps up, I'm going to run for president! I just hope someone will take care of that; so I won't have to!

6. Making Believe You Are Something in Nature, and Writing as If You Were That Thing Talking.

Purpose. To introduce the idea of various points of view and to encourage the children to use their imaginations.

Stimulative Activity. This writing was undertaken after we had had nature walks into the woods and on the railroad tracks. I did not tell the class before the walks that we would be writing about these experiences. I was curious to see what they would write about without any forewarning of "an assignment." After one of the walks, the children were told to pretend that they were something in Nature and to let that object talk through their writing.

*Teacher's note: I asked this student about the last thought. He had heard about initiations from his brother in Junior High and was already worrying about it.

My name is Star Light. I am a barn swallow. I am just a baby bird. Some third graders and first and second graders scared my mother away and now she won't come back. I have some brothers and sisters. The third graders feed us worms. The third graders are so noisy that my brother has to have ear plugs. Ear plugs are mushrooms. When I take my nap I never get to sleep. I just lay there, plugging my ears. The End. Love, Starlite.

by Tammy

My name is Dogwood. I am a tree.

I live across from Big Lake School. The third graders are the noisiest in the school. I bloom in the spring. My brother got chopped down. I hear my neighbor chirp. She is a barn swallow. The third graders climb me. And one of my limbs fell off. When I get to be a grandmother I will to my children to move away from that school before it is too late!!! the end.

by Yvonne

Conclusion. This project brought forth the most fluency and enthusiasm from most of the third-graders. It seemed interesting to me that their observations about their own class were brought into their writings, since I had not suggested it.

Bibliography:

Gee, Nancie, Reflections in Pike Place Markets (Albert P. Salisbury, Ed.). Seattle, Wash.: Superior Publishing Co., 1968.

Schlein, Miriam, City Boy Country Boy. Chicago: Children's Press, 1955.

Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education, "The Discovery Approach to Outdoor Education," Bulletin. AEOE, 2428 Walnut Boulevard, Walnut Creek, California 94596.

piece of paper is the most important thing they will do on a particular day.

Our school building was built in 1938. My room was added in 1949 and further new additions were completed in 1956. We have leaks in the roof and the lunchroom is in the basement. In contrast to this the outdoors around the school provides a wealth of place to explore. There is a large wooded hill west of the building, which is bisected by a trail. It is a logged-over area with dense ferns and undergrowth, a rich learning environment. The school is also very near a lake, and Big Lake Creek is another source of interest and study.

Across the street from the school, on the side opposite the wooded hill, are railroad tracks which the second-grade teacher and I, working cooperatively, utilized as a learning environment. (The trains have recently stopped using this particular track.) Along the edge of the school yard is a marvelous swamp, and beyond our school to the northeast we have a beautiful view of Mount Baker on a clear day. (The children who live with me learn early in the year that you bring a pleased smile from the teacher when you tell her, "You can see Mountain Baker today, teacher.")

The bringing of this wealth of environment into the consciousness of the children is an important task. The learning possibilities of such immediately accessible environments are endless, and traveling to and from them, observing their multiple dimensions, and sharing thoughts about these observations in lengthy discussion gave me many opportunities to pursue the objectives mentioned above. (One of the ways I used to help the children perceive these environments more acutely was through the use of cameras. A "learning packet" detailing the activity with cameras is included in the Appendix.)

Early in the year the class read the following poem by Christina G. Rossetti:

Hurt No Living Thing

Hurt no living thing:
   Ladybird, nor butterfly
Nor moth with dusty wing
   Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper so light of leap
   Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep.

Throughout the year this poem was a talisman for the children. Any spider, fly, or living creature was fiercely protected and found a haven in our terrarium. The poem brought us together, and was another means to encourage the children to share their thoughts and observations with me.

We were intensely aware of the swamp. We had watched its changes since Fall. In the Spring, the older boys caught frogs and swung on tree branches. Now the first graders felt an intimate concern over the life in the swamp. They even recited their poem to the second grade class when it was in our room. (The children had learned that second grade boys had been mistreating some of the swamp creatures.) We agreed that though we could not keep the older children from despoiling the life in the swamp, we could learn how to help the children who would be coming to school at Big Lake from now on to see the value of these creatures and of letting them live their life cycles safely in their swamp.

It seemed to ensue naturally that the subjects of pollution, littering, and destruction came into our discussions, but we did not make such topics the focus of our interest. When they did come into the discussions, we thought about what we could do, at that moment, to alleviate these problems. Indeed, after an all-day field trip to the beach, the children had

about writing about their pictures that the stories were unusually well-written. (And Frankie, who one day told the student teacher he didn't want to read out of a book, read his stories to everyone he could corner.)

We made large finger-painting designs on 24x28 white construction paper, and cut them to fit as book covers for the four stories and the photographs pasted on the page with the stories. The books were fastened together with brass fasteners. The children took their books home on the last day of school. Comments from the mothers were enthusiastic and appreciative of what the children had been able to do. I was interested to observe how hard it was for some parents to believe that their children could use a camera by themselves. It added understanding on the parents' part about how independent a first grader can be.

Conclusion:

My participation in the Sedro-Woolley Project motivated my thinking in this effort. This report is written in an anecdotal style as a record of what one teacher did with her class. The children did get a thrill out of having cameras they could use by themselves. They used their sense of sight to decide what pictures they wanted to take, and their choices gave me an insight into their young lives. I discovered that they took pictures of their pets, their families, and the scenery around their homes. Mark, an accomplished guitarist for a seven-year-old, put his guitars on the bed and took a picture of them. He also took a picture of a picture his father had painted (which pleased his mother very much). Dennis took a picture of his mother in her red dress and wrote in his story that "she has her wig on." Jeff, who watches every logging truck go by the school-room window, took a picture of his dad's logging truck. It was an exciting and worthwhile project for all of us.

Bibliography and Materials List:

Suid, Murphy, Painting With the Sun. Boston: CSCS, Inc., 1970. (A book on photography for young children.)

Twelve Instamatic-type cameras

Flashbulbs

Film

Newspapers

Photographs (preferably with local emphasis; ours were taken by Lee Mann)

WORD/INSTANT-RESPONSE SURVEY

Pupil's Name_____ Date_____

Words Given	Pupil's Response
Color Words	
Red	
Yellow	
Blue	
Green	
Black	
Object Words	
house	
car	
Nature Words	
tree	
mountain	
water	
air	
Family Words	
Mother	
Father	
Sister	
Brother	
Emotional Words	
Love	
Hate	
Good	
Bad	
Mad	

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